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A Study Of The Occupational Status Of The Prairie View Home Economics

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**A STUDY OF THE OCCUPATIONAL STATUS
OF THE PRAIRIE VIEW HOME ECONOMICS
GRADUATES, 1922-48**

MITCHELL

1949

A STUDY OF THE OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF THE PRAIRIE VIEW
HOME ECONOMICS GRADUATES, 1922-48

by

Tommye Mayes Mitchell

A Thesis in Home Economics Education Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of
Master of Science

in the

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of

Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College

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T. M. M.

DEDICATION

The writer dedicates this thesis to her Mother, Mrs. K. L. Mayes, whose love is her most priceless possession.

BIOGRAPHY

Tommye Mayes Mitchell, the only child of Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Mayes, was born in Hempstead, Texas, May 30, 1926. She received her elementary and high school education at Sam Schwarz High School in Hempstead, Texas. She graduated from Sam Schwarz May, 1942 as valedictorian of her class and was thereby awarded a scholarship to Prairie View.

In September, 1942, she matriculated at Prairie View College, and 1946 was awarded the Bachelor of Science Degree in Home Economics "with distinction".

After teaching two years in the public schools of Texas, the Prairie View State College Division of Graduate Study granted her a fellowship to do advanced study in Home Economics Education.

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INTRODUCTION

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The phenomenal increase of population throughout the entire country, the rapid growth of towns and cities, the advent of the machine

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In evaluating their school progress, many of these institutions have used such criteria as the number of professors in comparison to the number of students, the degree which the faculty members have earned, the power of volume in the library, the number of buildings, the type and amount of equipment, and the course offerings; all of which is useful information for the colleges to have about themselves.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The miraculous increase of population throughout the entire country, the rapid growth of towns and cities, the advent of the machine industry, and the change in commerce from local importance to one of world-wide significance have fundamentally changed the folk-ways and mores of the people to meet the new demands of life.¹ There is a demand for more education and young men and women are crowding the secondary schools and colleges as never before. Consequently, more equipment is needed, more teachers must be trained, and the curriculum must be broadened to meet the present needs. According to Meyer (9), some of the institutions have been slow in adjusting their curriculum to the needs of society as a result of the lack of information on the occupational status of their graduates. The occupational distribution of the graduates of American colleges is a matter of great importance to all institutions of learning, to their officers, students, graduates, and prospective students.

In evaluating their school programs, many of these institutions have used such criteria as the number of professors in proportion to the number of students, the degrees which the faculty members have earned, the number of volumes in the library, the number of buildings, the type and amount of equipment, and the course offerings; all of which is useful information for the colleges to have about themselves.

1

Jacob C. Meyer, Small Colleges And Teacher Training, p. 1

These facts alone fall short of the anticipated goal however, in showing one a complete picture because they give a measure of the machine only without taking into account the product also, and it is the product of the college which is important to society.

The college curriculum in the United States has changed from time to time as a result of the influences of new philosophies of education. According to Meyer (9), the history of the growth of colleges in America can be divided into three basic periods, namely, (1) The Early Period (1686-1860) (2) The Liberalizing Period (1868-1900) and (3) The Modern Period (since 1900). During the early period, eleven colleges were founded of which Harvard is the oldest. The foremost purpose of institutions founded in this period was that of preparation of individuals for the ministry. The decade following the civil war was the beginning of the next era called the liberalizing period, and it was in this period that liberty in the choice of subjects became fundamental. The modern period dates from 1900. In this period, there developed a tendency toward the revision of the college curriculum so that subjects would be included that the graduates might use later, rather than subjects which were not needed after commencement. Since 1900, colleges have recognized a growing demand for training in commercial and industrial lines, but especially has the demand for training teachers been growing.²

The college under discussion has been known as Prairie View Normal, Prairie View State Normal and Industrial college, Prairie View State College, and Prairie View University, and at the present time, it

is known as Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College. The college was organized during the liberalizing period (1879). However, the Division of Home Economics, as such, at Prairie View College was not organized until the modern period (1918). Before that time, the courses now making up the Home Economics curriculum were called Domestic Science and Art and consisted primarily of cooking and sewing.³ At the present time, the Division of Home Economics offers courses dealing with the various phases of foods and nutrition, textiles, clothing, and design, the house and home management and care and training of children. Those courses along with others in Mathematics, English, Education and the natural and social sciences are combined to form a curriculum that is sufficiently flexible to provide for the needs of the following specific groups: those non-majors who wish to enrich their general and cultural education by selecting courses from the Home Economics curriculum, those who are taking a minor in Home Economics, those who hope to become proficient in one phase of Home Economics in preparation for a career other than teaching, those who are to become teachers of home-making in high schools, or some phase of Home Economics in college, and graduate students who wish to take refresher work, or who are candidates for a master's degree.⁴

Although much has been said about the course offerings of the Division of Home Economics, little is known about the product of this effort. Where are the individuals who have been graduated from Prairie

³ Prairie View State Normal And Industrial Catalogue, 1918-1919, Fortieth Edition

⁴ Prairie View University Bulletin, 1946-47, Sixty-Seventh Catalog Edition

View Agricultural and Mechanical College from May, 1922 to August, 1948, and what are they doing? This is a question, the answer to which is of unquestionable value for those who are responsible for outlining course requirements and for guiding students in the selection of courses of study. The places graduates are called to fill and the fields of activity demanding their services indicate the type of preparation students need while in college if they are to perform adequately the social tasks demanded of them. Briggs (17), states, "The first duty of the college is to enable the student to do better those socially desirable things which he is most likely to do anyway".

It is the purpose of this study to find out what the Prairie View Home Economics graduates from 1922 to 1948 are doing for livelihood. It is the stated opinion of some of the college administrators that the findings of this study will be of invaluable aid to the college if the types of jobs that the Home Economics graduates were engaged in are revealed. Such knowledge probably could be used by the officials as a basis for offering more effective guidance and use could be made of the facts to point the way toward some necessary curriculum changes. The recent addresses gained by means of the survey would also be useful in contacting graduates for various reasons.

Creswell (33), studied the occupations of the recent Home Economics graduates of the University of Georgia. The findings of this study revealed that almost half of the graduates were teaching and 92 per cent of those teaching were Home Economics teachers in high schools. The remainder of the graduates were engaged in home demonstration work, home service (public utility) work, dietetics, farm security work, and graduate study. Creswell further stated that previous studies of Home

Economics graduates of the University of Georgia showed that those who had been graduated in the earlier years had filled positions as interior decorators, extension specialists in nutrition, clothing, and home improvement, state and district extension leaders, college teachers, and journalists in Home Economics.

Millions of decisions are made each day on the basis of occupational information. Sometimes the information is meager, while at other times, it has been carefully compiled and is authentic in every respect. Whether the occupational information is accurate or otherwise, its use may effect the personnel policies of an entire organization. It may effect the life career of one person or change the curriculum of a large school system. Occupational information must be considered in individual and group educational and vocational counselling and in planning and establishing new and revised courses of study.

As a part of the guidance program, administrators in colleges ought to be in position to give students reliable information on such questions as: which of the college majors are most likely to lead to well paying jobs immediately after graduation, what remuneration may be expected, what have been the experiences of some of the former graduates in securing satisfactory placement, and how has this placement been related to the college courses pursued. Administrators faced with such questions throughout the year need recent and pertinent facts. A study of the occupational status of the graduates will probably bring the answers to these and many other important problems. Shartle (13), feels that on a whole secondary schools and colleges are still inadequate in supplying information that reflects the nature of the job opportunities in which their graduates seek employment. Unless the edu-

cational programs are geared to the actual employment needs of the country, a huge amount of wasted money and effort will result.

For the purposes of this study, the writer defined the following terms: Occupational status refers to the positions which the graduates were holding at the time the survey was made. Prairie View Home Economics graduates includes all of the individuals upon whom Prairie View has conferred the Bachelor of Science Degree in Home Economics or the Master of Science Degree with a major in Home Economics Education. The persons who earned a Master's Degree with a minor in Home Economics Education have not been included in this study unless they graduated from the Prairie View Home Economics Division on the under-graduate level.

It was assumed that a majority of the graduates would probably be engaged in teaching. This hypothesis grew out of several facts. To begin with, one of the three major purposes of Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College is the preparation and training of Negro teachers. In the second place, it was felt that the relatively high salaries would appeal to the college student. Next, the graduates can meet the state requirements within the four years of the college course and secure the teacher's certificate without any special difficulty. The increasing number of Home Economics graduates has crowded the field; therefore, it is assumed that many of the more recent graduates might not be teaching or working in the field of Home Economics. Because of the greater number of people to be served and the variety of jobs to be had in the cities during the war, people tended to migrate in increasingly large numbers. Consequently, it was further assumed that more of the graduates would be found working in larger

cities than in the small villages. It was expected that many of the recent addresses of the graduates would not be found in the various files in the several offices. Moreover, many of the addresses which were available could not be used successfully inasmuch as it was known that some of the graduates had changed their addresses and others were known to be deceased.

The work which individuals do to earn their livelihood stamps them with certain physical and mental traits characteristic of the form and level of their labor, defines their circle of friends and acquaintances, affects the use of their leisure time, influences their political affiliations, and tends to set the boundaries of their culture. "Except for those few persons whose way of life and future are fixed by the inheritance of great wealth, occupation is the supreme determinant of human careers".⁵

Although the occupational pattern of the Prairie View Home Economics graduates may change some from year to year, it is the hope of the writer that the data based on the replies received may be of some value to those who direct the policies of Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College.

⁵ Percy E. Davidson, Occupational Mobility In An American Democracy, p. 3

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A search through available literature showed that many secondary schools and colleges have attempted to make studies of their graduates, however, only a limited number of such studies have been concerned with Home Economics graduates. It is expected that the review of these studies may bring a better understanding of the trends of investigation in this area, which is an important function of the college.

Bales (16), in 1933, made a study of three hundred Home Economics students of North Dakota Agricultural College and found that they were engaged in fifty-four different occupations. Teaching was most frequently mentioned while other positions were tea-room managers, state supervisors, dietitians, laboratory technicians, home demonstration agents, managers of gift shops, deans of Home Economics, social workers, state recreational leaders, and experts in commercial fields.

Anderson (15) in 1933, made a study of the girls who had graduated from Barnesville, Minnesota High School from 1922 to 1932. Her purpose was to determine what the girls were doing in order to discover if there was a need for Home Economics training, and if so, the curriculum could be revised accordingly. She was able to contact 136 girls, almost half of whom were either married or helping at home. The remainder were engaged in a variety of other jobs such as nursing, teaching, and commercial work. She concluded that inasmuch as almost half of the girls were either married or helping at home, Home Economics should be added to the Barnesville High School curriculum.

In 1932, Snow (26) studied, among other things, the occupations

of the living alumni of Centre College for a fifty-year period. Questionnaires were sent to 1,031 men who had graduated from the college from 1881 to 1931. The returns were particularly good, for only 8 per cent failed to respond. Replies were received therefore from 948, of which number 51 per cent held positions or were engaged in professional work such as teaching, school superintendents, lawyers, ministers, physicians, surgeons, and engineers. Seventeen per cent were engaged in trades such as salesmanship, insurance, retail and wholesale dealings, and real estate services while the remainder were employed in agriculture, manufacturing and mechanical industries, civil and military service, clerical work, transportation, and domestic work.

The student council of the General College at the University of Minnesota, under the guidance of Humber (20) set up a research committee for the purpose of making a follow-up study of a sample of the graduates. The data were gathered by means of a carefully constructed questionnaire which was mailed to the graduates of the years 1934-35 and 1939-40. Data showed that the average length of time that the graduates were unemployed immediately after graduation was less for the 1939-40 graduates than it was for the 1934-35 graduates. It was felt that the 1939-40 group found employment sooner after graduation because of the war period which was beginning to make itself felt at that time. More of the 1939-40 graduates than the 1934-35 graduates were found to be unemployed at the time of the study (1942), but this was probably to be expected since they had had a shorter time in which to become adjusted in positions.

Johnson (21), in an extensive study of Negro college graduates, found that in 1935 there was only one (1) Negro college gradu-

ate to every four hundred (400) of the Negro population. Seventy-two per cent of the Negro college graduates were in strictly professional fields. As might be expected, more than half were in educational work alone. Extremely few were found in agriculture, transportation, public services, clerical services, manufacturing and mechanical trades and natural sciences. Johnson further states, "Graduates of Negro colleges in great numbers engage in elementary school teaching, preaching, library science, insurance, medicine, school principalships, and college presidencies."

Thompson (29) in 1938, made a study of the 181 members of the June 1926 graduating class of the University of Indiana. Responses were received from 83 of the graduates, most of whom were married and fully satisfied with their present jobs. They were working for the most part in their major fields or in a field closely allied to their major. Twenty-five per cent had worked on only one job since graduation in contrast to 52 per cent who had changed jobs from three to six times.

Greenleaf (6), in cooperation with the Office of Education, Department of the Interior, made a study of 46,000 graduates of 31 institutions of higher learning from 1928-1935. The age at graduation reported most frequently was 22 years. College men tended to marry earlier and in larger numbers than did college women; on the other hand, more college women were divorced.

Two-thirds of the individuals who reported were engaged in professional services and were found to be living in cities of 100,000 population and above. Seventeen per cent of the men were teaching as compared to 48 per cent of the women. According to Greenleaf, this was

to be expected, for teaching seemed to have been one of the best paid positions for a women during her first few years out of college. It was further found that men tended to work more in line with their major field than did women.

Weintraub and Salley (30), in 1944, made a study of the graduates of Hunter College of the City of New York. One pre-war class and the most recent war-time class that had had an opportunity to be placed in industry or the professions were selected. Accordingly, the members of the June, 1939 and June, 1943 classes were sent post card questionnaires. Six-hundred eighty graduates of the class of 1943 (84 per cent) responded, while 407 responses (45 per cent) were received from the class of 1939. The positions held most frequently by the graduates of 1939 in order of appearance were stenographer, clerical worker, teacher, book-keeper, statistician, laboratory technician, social worker, personnel worker, and finally those in managerial positions. It was interesting to note that 19 per cent of the 1939 class devoted full time to home-making. The 1.0 per cent who reported unemployment gave family or personal illness as the reason. The war was clearly reflected in the increased proportion of the 1943 graduates who were found to be engaged in certain positions not mentioned by the earlier class. The majority of the individuals in both classes were employed by private industry. Space was provided at the bottom of the post card questionnaire for comments. Many of the graduates made remarks and some even wrote letters. One commented thus, "The words Hunter College seem to work like magic in opening the doors in the business world. I'll forever be grateful for my degree".

It is the hope of the writer that the studies herein reviewed may provide a better understanding of the problem now in preparation.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF STUDY

This study was made in an attempt to determine what the Prairie View Home Economics alumni who graduated between May, 1922 and August, 1948 were doing for a livelihood. From the graduation of the first degree class in 1922 to the end of the academic year 1947-48, Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College granted 982 Bachelor of Science degrees in Home Economics and 15 Master's degrees with a major in Home Economics Education. Some individuals received both degrees within this period.

The commencement programs on file in the Offices of the Registrar and of the Director of Home Economics supplied the names of the individuals who had been graduated. The names were listed in alphabetical order and grouped according to the year of graduation. The names of the graduates whose addresses were available or could be obtained comprised the mailing list of 700 graduates. With the exception of the 18 who were known to be deceased, the remainder could not be located because their whereabouts were unknown.

A questionnaire, which when filled out would supply the needed information, was constructed. (See Appendix-Exhibit A) According to Elmer, the kinds of questionnaires which individuals answer may be divided into three categories: (1) those which involve a study of a problem on which the recipients have some definite ideas (2) those wherein the recipients have a personal knowledge of the sender and (3) those which are short and well prepared.¹

¹M. C. Elmer, Social Research, p. 421

With these points in mind, the writer constructed a post card questionnaire which would provide the following information: the graduates full name, present position, location of position, permanent address, and marital status. Space was provided at the bottom of the post card for remarks. This type of questionnaire was used because, in the first place, it was of sufficient size to contain all of the information that would be needed. Such a form was more economical than a mimeographed sheet because of the additional postage involved. In addition, the card would be easier to file for future use. Furthermore, it was felt that the response to this type of questionnaire would be better than to a long detailed questionnaire.

Weintraub and Salley (30) demonstrated the effectiveness of the use of the post card questionnaire when they received a 75 per cent response in a study of the graduates of Hunter College of the City of New York in 1944.

A letter explaining the purpose of the investigation accompanied the questionnaire. (See Appendix-Exhibit B) The nature of the appeal to be made in a letter of transmittal is important in any study. The recipient must be motivated and provided with an incentive that will overcome the reluctance most people feel toward answering questionnaires.

Sletto (24) experimented, in a carefully controlled study, with three types of letters requesting 1600 former university students to answer a questionnaire. His procedure and results are of interest.

The first letter called upon the individual to help improve education for the thousands of young people who would be entering the University during the year. The second letter directed attention to the changes occurring in education and requested help to guide these changes

in the right direction. The third letter challenged the recipient to help do something that people say can not be done. Although all of the letters secured a good response, the first letter yielded the highest returns, 67 per cent. These points were considered in the construction of the letter used in securing the necessary data for this study.

The questionnaires accompanied by letters, were mailed to 700 graduates. After a period of a month and a half, 419 (64 per cent of those believed to have received questionnaires) had responded. According to Odum, "Advertising houses estimate a return of only five to ten per cent and the research student who gets a twenty per cent return on his first appeal may consider himself fortunate"². Nevertheless, the writer was interested in getting as many responses as could possibly be obtained. Consequently, another careful search was made which revealed the addresses of 81 graduates to whom the investigator had not written. According to Elmer (4), one can generally expect a good response from recipients who have a personal knowledge of the sender. For this reason, letters mailed to these individuals contained personal notes from the Director of the Home Economics Division urging an immediate reply. The Director of Home Economics has held the present position for more than two decades. At the close of the second attempt, 32 additional responses had been received making a total of 451 (62 per cent of those believed to have received questionnaires and 46 per cent of the individuals who have been graduated). The returns were tabulated and analyzed. The occupations in which

³

Howard Odum, Introduction To Social Research, p. 376

the graduates were engaged were discussed in relation to the size of town in which they lived,³ the year of graduation and the marital status. The initial findings were based on the data received from the 451 graduates who responded.

Although the survey was closed with a 62 per cent return, the writer, deeply concerned about the occupational status of the graduates who did not respond, decided to make a follow-up study of them. The master tabulation sheets furnished the names of the individuals from whom no responses had been received. These names were placed on small slips of paper and put in a container and mixed well. The writer selected fifty slips from the container, mixing again after each selection. Informal letters, urging their reply, were mailed to each of the fifty graduates whose names were pulled from the container.

When time would permit this brief follow-up study to remain open no longer, the survey was closed with 36 responses (72 per cent of those mailed). The responses from these graduates were tabulated, interpreted, and discussed.

In the final analysis, a summary was made and conclusions drawn based on all responses received. In a large part, the influence of the depression. The number of graduates in the years immediately following the depression increased until the beginning of the war period, at which time, there was a marked decrease in the number of graduates. The largest class (79 members) was graduated in 1944.

According to Salinger (34), there is a rapid increase in the number of graduates throughout the nation. The number increased from 846 in 1933 to 1,221 in 1944. This is shown in Figure 2 adapted from Salinger's study.

3

The sizes of towns were determined by reference to the 1940 census.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to find out what those Home Economics majors were doing for livelihood who had graduated from Prairie View between the dates of May, 1922 and August, 1948.

The Division of Home Economics at Prairie View granted 996 bachelor's and master's degrees during this period. Some of the individuals included in the study were granted both degrees. The students who earned a Master's Degree with a Minor in Home Economics Education were not included unless they had also graduated from the Home Economics Division with a Bachelor's Degree. The final list of individuals who had received the Bachelor of Science Degree or the Master of Science Degree with a major in Home Economics Education totaled 982.

That there had been considerable variations in the sizes of the classes over the years is shown in Figure 1. It will be observed that the number of graduates increased from 1 in 1922 to 50 in 1931. A slight drop in 1932 was noticed, and a still larger drop in 1933. In all probability, this decline was due, in a large part, to the influence of the depression. The number of graduates in the years immediately following the depression increased until the beginning of the war period, at which time, there was a decided decrease in the number of graduates. The largest class (79 members) was graduated in 1948.

According to Caliver (32), there is a rapid increase in the number of graduates throughout the nation. The number increased from 296 in 1922 to 3,822 in 1940 as is shown in Figure 2 adapted from Caliver's study. However, this increase was to be expected for in the first place, the

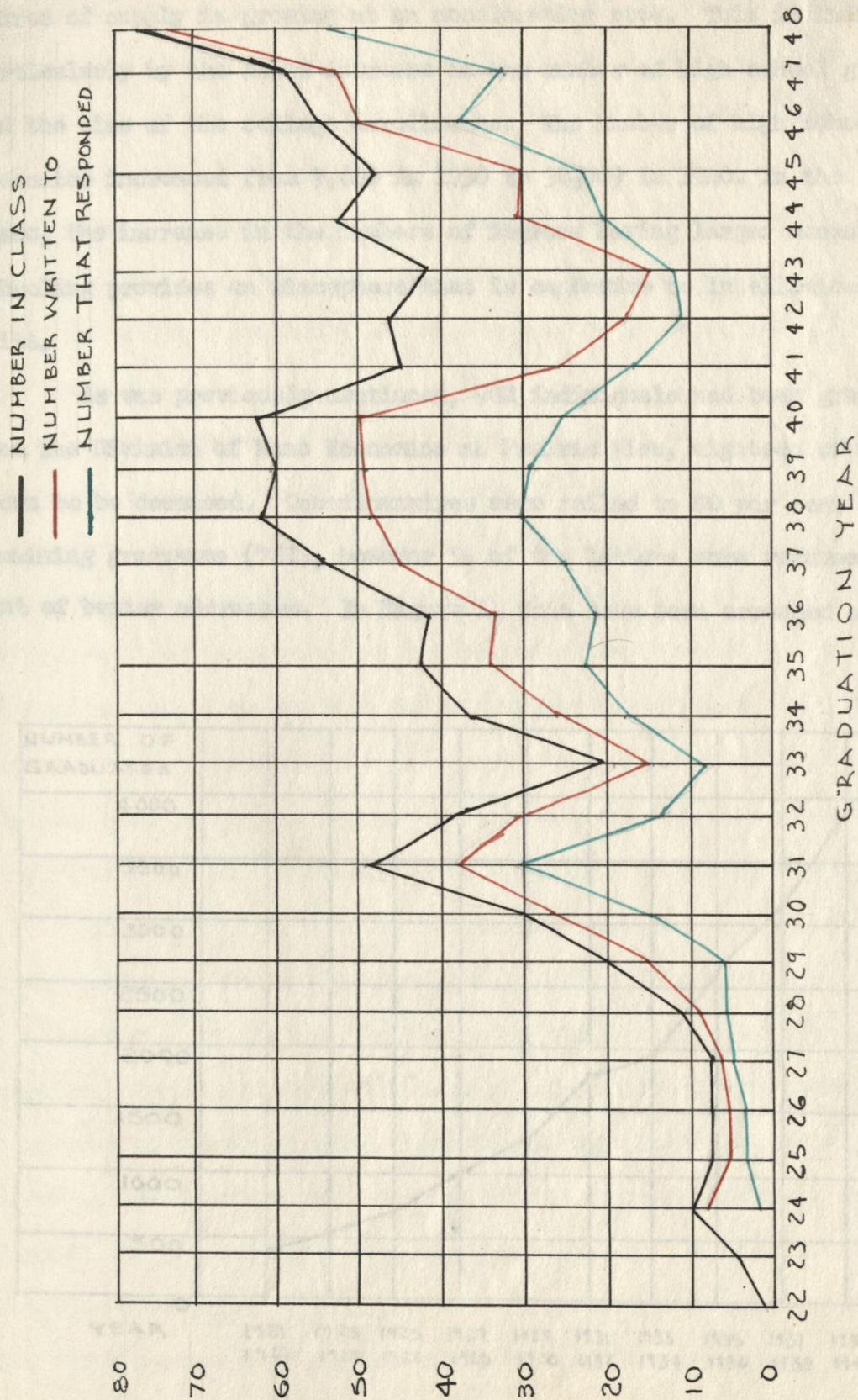


FIGURE 1 GRADUATES ACCORDING TO YEARS, NUMBER WRITTEN TO AND NUMBER WHO RESPONDED

source of supply is growing at an accelerating rate. This is indicated particularly by the rapid increase in the number of high school graduates and the size of the college enrollments. The number of high school graduates increased from 9,640 in 1930 to 30,009 in 1940. In the second place, the increase in the numbers of Negroes having larger amounts of schooling provides an atmosphere that is conducive to intellectual pursuits.

As was previously mentioned, 982 individuals had been graduated from the Division of Home Economics at Prairie View, eighteen of whom were known to be deceased. Questionnaires were mailed to 80 per cent of the remaining graduates (781), however 54 of the letters were returned for want of better addresses. In Figure 1, data have been arranged so as to

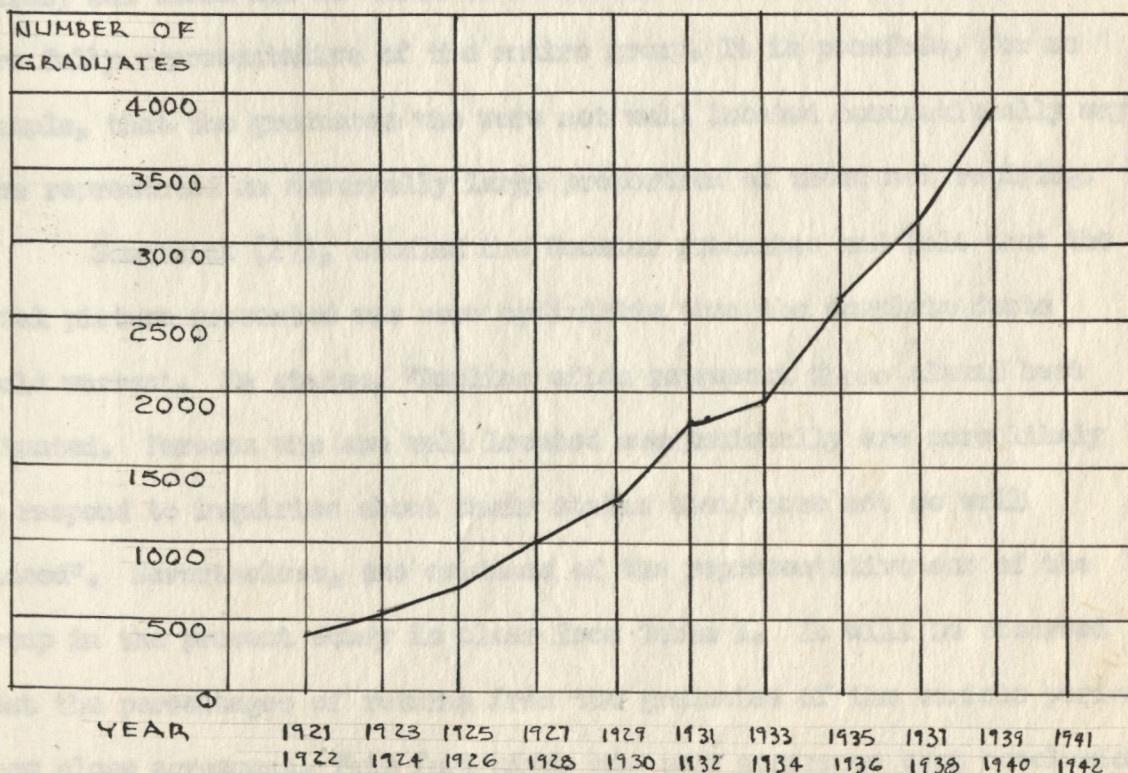


FIGURE 2 INCREASE IN COLLEGE GRADUATION AMONG NEGROES

show the number of graduates written to, and the number who responded according to class. At the close of the survey period, 451 responses (62 per cent of the total mailed which had not been returned for want of better addresses) had been received. According to Suchman (28), the better educated are more likely to return questionnaires than are the less educated. The fact that all of the individuals contacted in this study were college graduates probable accounts, in part, for the desirable response.

Data presented in Figure 1 show that the graduates in the earlier years responded as well and in some instances better than did those in the more recent years. A strikingly large percentage (84 per cent) of the 1927 class responded. It was believed that an adequate number of replies had been received from the graduates who received the questionnaires, but there was no definite assurance that the ones who replied were fully representative of the entire group. It is possible, for an example, that the graduates who were not well located occupationally may have represented an abnormally large proportion of those not replying.

Southwick (27), studied the Wooster graduates and felt that the total picture presented was more optimistic than the complete facts would warrant. He states, "Replies often represent those alumni best situated. Persons who are well located occupationally are more likely to respond to inquiries about their status than those not so well placed". Nevertheless, one evidence of the representativeness of the group in the present study is clear from Table 1. It will be observed that the percentages of returns from the graduates of the various periods show close agreement. This fact gives one some assurance that conclusions can be drawn with considerable confidence on the basis of the group re-

presented by the returns.

TABLE I. Questionnaires Mailed And Returned
Within Three Periods

Period	Graduates in the Period	Number wrote	Per- cent who re- sponded	Number	Per cent
1922-1929	62	45	72	23	63
1930-1939	434	339	78	199	62
1940-1948	486	337	77	229	60
Total	982	781	77	451	62

* Some questionnaires were returned for want of better addresses.

One of the first things one would want to know about the occupational status of any group of graduates is the percentage unemployed. Figure 3 shows that only 2 per cent of the individuals who responded were found to be unemployed, and one-half of these were in the 1948 class. However, this was to be expected for according to Reeves (11), one should not regard the occupational status of recent college graduates as final for many are serving apprenticeships in occupations which serve only as stepping stones to their ultimate careers while others are unemployed while waiting for satisfactory placement.

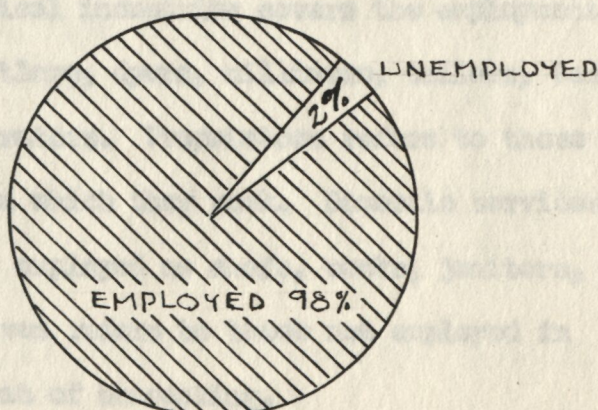


FIGURE 3 PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATES UNEMPLOYED

At this point, it is appropriate to show the extent to which

these employed graduates (98 per cent) were found to be engaged in the various occupational services. Those services in which the graduates were found to be engaged can be grouped under seven basic classifications, namely: professional services, clerical services, managerial services, commercial services, domestic services, manufacturing and mechanical industries, proprietors, and housewives. This classification is adapted from the one used by Reeves (11) who made a study of 15,840 alumni of the University of Chicago.

In order to insure clarity, the writer briefly analyzed the terms used in this classification. Professional services are those which cover the employment of teachers, supervisors, principals, directors, social workers, home demonstration agents, librarians, and those engaged in graduate study. Managerial services are those which include the employment of people as managers, public officials, inspectors, and telephone, telegraph and railroad agents. Commercial services refers to the employment of real estate and insurance agents, buyers, and clerks in stores. Clerical services includes the employment of bookkeepers, clerks (except in stores), collectors, and stenographers. Manufacturing and mechanical industries covers the employment of individuals as bakers, bottlers, dyers, milliners, tailors, tanners, weavers, and machine operators. Proprietors refers to those individuals who own the businesses in which they work. Domestic services include those rendered by people employed as chefs, cooks, janitors, maids, and launderers. Housewives refers to those not employed in any occupation except that of homemaking.

A glance at Figure 4 shows that a large majority (80 per cent) of the graduates were in professional services. Johnson (21), found

in a very extensive study, that 72 per cent of the Negro college graduates were in strictly professional fields. However, this is not only true of Negro college graduates, but seems to be true also of all college graduates. As another illustration of this, Greenleaf (6), studied 46,000 graduates of 31 institutions of higher learning and found that two-thirds of them were engaged in professional services. To further illustrate the point, Snow (26) found after studying the living alumni of Centre College over a fifty-year period that more than half of those who responded were engaged in professional work. The findings of Bales (16) and Creswell (33) also showed that most of their graduates were engaged in professional services.

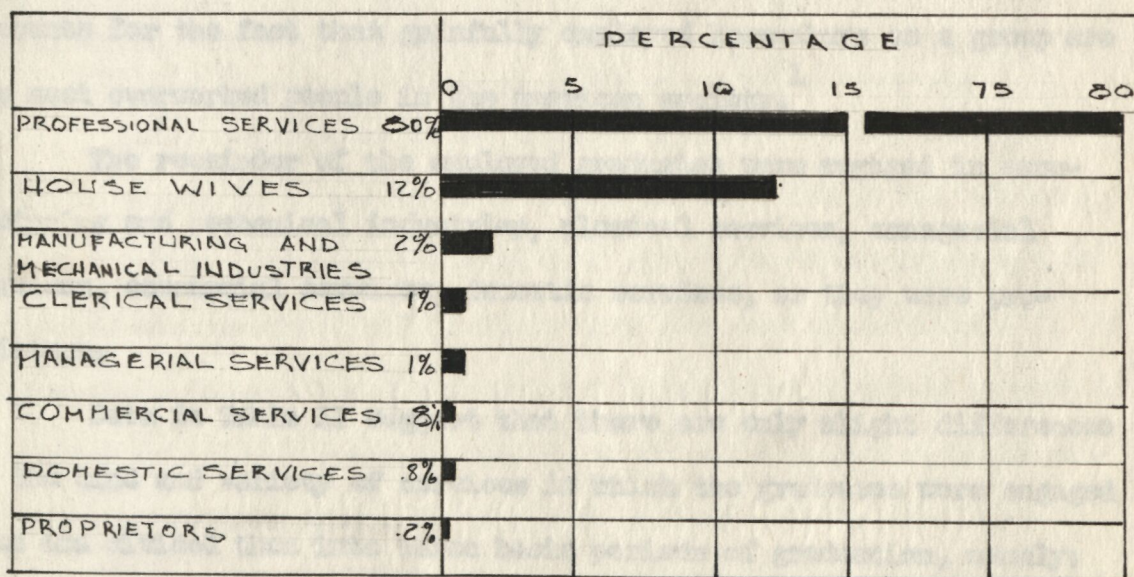


FIGURE 4 SERVICES IN WHICH GRADUATES WERE ENGAGED

The second largest number in a single occupational field was the 12 per cent who held no other position except that of a homemaker. The

1940 census listed 28,665,000 homemakers out of 39,803,000 employed women. Women who were gainfully employed (holding paid positions) numbered only 11,138,000. The rest were full-time homemakers. Thus, full-time homemaking consumes the time not only of a significant portion of Prairie View Home Economics graduates, but the same is true of a large portion of employed women in the United States.

The fact that so many women give full time to homemaking suggests that for many families these services at home are worth at least as much as the women might earn. When a married woman undertakes gainful employment, sometimes, it means that the family members are deprived of services previously enjoyed. At times, other members of the family curtail their leisure to assume additional tasks. Many times, the employed homemaker continues to perform household duties. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that gainfully employed homemakers as a group are the most overworked people in the American society.¹

The remainder of the employed graduates were engaged in manufacturing and mechanical industries, clerical services, managerial services, commercial services, domestic services, or they were proprietors.

Data in Table II suggest that there are only slight differences in the kind and variety of services in which the graduates were engaged when one divided them into three basic periods of graduation, namely: 1924-29, 1930-39, and 1940-48. Table II shows that the majority of the graduates were engaged in professional services regardless of the period

1

Margaret G. Reid, "The Economic Contribution of Homemakers", Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 251 May, 1947

of graduation. It is further revealed that the individuals who were graduated from 1924-29 were not employed in three of the occupational areas; those who completed their work from 1930-39 were not employed in two of the areas, and the individuals who completed their work since 1940 were engaged in all of the occupational services with the exception of proprietorships.

TABLE II. Employment of Graduates According To
The Period of Graduation

Services	1924-29	1930-39	1940-49
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Professional	78.0	84.0	78.0
Clerical	2.0	0.0	3.0
Managerial	3.0	1.0	1.0
Commercial	0.0	0.0	2.4
Domestic	2.0	0.0	0.4
Manufacturing and Mechanical	0.0	2.0	3.0
Proprietors	0.0	0.6	0.0
House-wives	15.0	11.4	9.0

Thus, there seems to be shown here a tendency for the graduates to engage in a variety of services as the years go on. In some instances, the graduates probably went into other areas because they found no work in the field in which they were most interested. On the other hand, perhaps the graduates were being given a chance to work in occupational fields where previously there had been few or no opportunities. Further study may make such statements more substantial.

As previously mentioned, there were no proprietors among the individuals who graduated in 1940 and after, but one would expect few, if any, among recent graduates. This is borne out by Greenleaf (6), who found that less than one-tenth of the women graduates who answered his questionnaire were proprietors. In his study, there seemed to

have been a tendency for the proportion of graduates who owned their own businesses to increase with each year out of college for about eight years.

Goldstein predicts a moderate expansion in the number of proprietors because of the growing complexity of economic and governmental organization.² This occupational group increased slightly during the war period and more after the post-war period. The services in which the graduates were engaged have been considered from the standpoint of the period of graduation.

The next approach is from the standpoint of the marital status. Of the 451 graduates who responded, 74 per cent (334) were married and 26 per cent (117) were single. Table III indicates only slight differences in the services rendered by the graduates when grouped according to their marital status. More than 90 per cent of the individuals in both groups were engaged in professional services. One area in which the single graduates could not enter was that of housewives, which claimed 14 per cent of the married graduates. Slightly more single graduates than married ones were engaged in professional services, clerical services, managerial services, domestic services, and in the manufacturing and mechanical industries.

It was found that 98.2 per cent of the married women were employed. The 1940 census showed that 70 per cent of the married women in the United States were gainfully employed. Miller states, "The changing attitude toward the employment of married women is responsible

² Harold Goldstein, "The Changing Occupational Structure", Monthly Labor Review, Vol. 64, 1947, pp. 654-659

for the increase shown in each succeeding census year, in the proportion of married women who work".³ Durand is of the opinion that the percentage of married women working for pay is likely to increase, inasmuch as a married woman's employment is sometimes a necessity for the upkeep of her family. It is also an economic benefit to the nation since it makes possible a higher income per capita of the population. Some individuals do not approve of married women working because they feel that the birth rate will be affected. However, the 1940 census showed that although the number of working wives rose to an unprecedented figure, the birth rate was at it's highest.⁴

TABLE III. Employment Of The Graduates According To Their Marital Status

Employment of the Graduates in Services	Married		Single	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Professional	265	81	100	88.5
Clerical	2	.4	4	8.5
Managerial	0	0	6	5.3
Proprietors	1	.2	0	0
Commercial	3	.6	1	.9
Domestic	7	1.9	1	.9
Manufacturing and Mechanical	7	1.9	1	.9
Housewives	46	14.1	0	0
Total	327	100	113	100

Table IV furnishes information on the relationship existing between the services in which the graduates were engaged and the size of town in which they were working. The sizes of towns were determined by reference to the 1940 census. One third of the individuals engaged in professional work were employed in towns under 2,500. One-fourth

³ Frieda Miller, "Women In The Labor Force", Annals of American Academy of Political And Social Science, Vol. 257, May, 1947, pp. 34-41.

⁴ John Durand, "Married Women In The Labor Force", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 52, 1946-47.

were working in towns with a population of 2,500 - 9,999. There were about as many people engaged in managerial and clerical services working in small towns as there were in the large ones.

TABLE IV. Employment Of The Graduates According To The Size Of Town In Which They Lived

Services	Sizes Of Towns					Total
	Under 2,500	2,500 9,999	10,000 24,999	25,000 100,000	Above 100,000	
Professional	121	93	31	49	71	366
Managerial	3	0	0	0	3	6
Clerical	2	0	0	0	4	6
Domestic	0	0	1	1	2	4
Commercial	0	0	0	0	4	4
Manufacturing and Mechanical	0	2	0	0	6	8
Proprietors	1	0	0	0	0	1
Housewives	11	3	2	11	19	46
Total	138	98	34	61	109	440

Graduates engaged in domestic services were not working in towns below 10,000. Towns above 100,000 claimed all of the graduates engaged in commercial services, and 75 per cent of those working in manufacturing and mechanical industries. A town less than 2,500 claimed the one proprietor of the entire group. More than 40 per cent of the housewives were living in towns above 100,000. It also appears from Table IV that approximately one-third of all the employed graduates were working in towns under 25,000 and approximately one-fourth were working in towns above 100,000.

When the graduates were grouped according to the period of graduation, it was found that a larger percentage of the individuals who were graduated between 1924-29 were found to be working in towns with a population of 2,500 to 9,999 than any other size. A larger percentage of the individuals who were graduated from 1930-39 were found to be working in towns above 25,000 than in any other size; whereas, towns

below 25,000 claimed a larger percentage of the individuals who graduated after 1940 than towns of any other size as is shown in Figure 5.

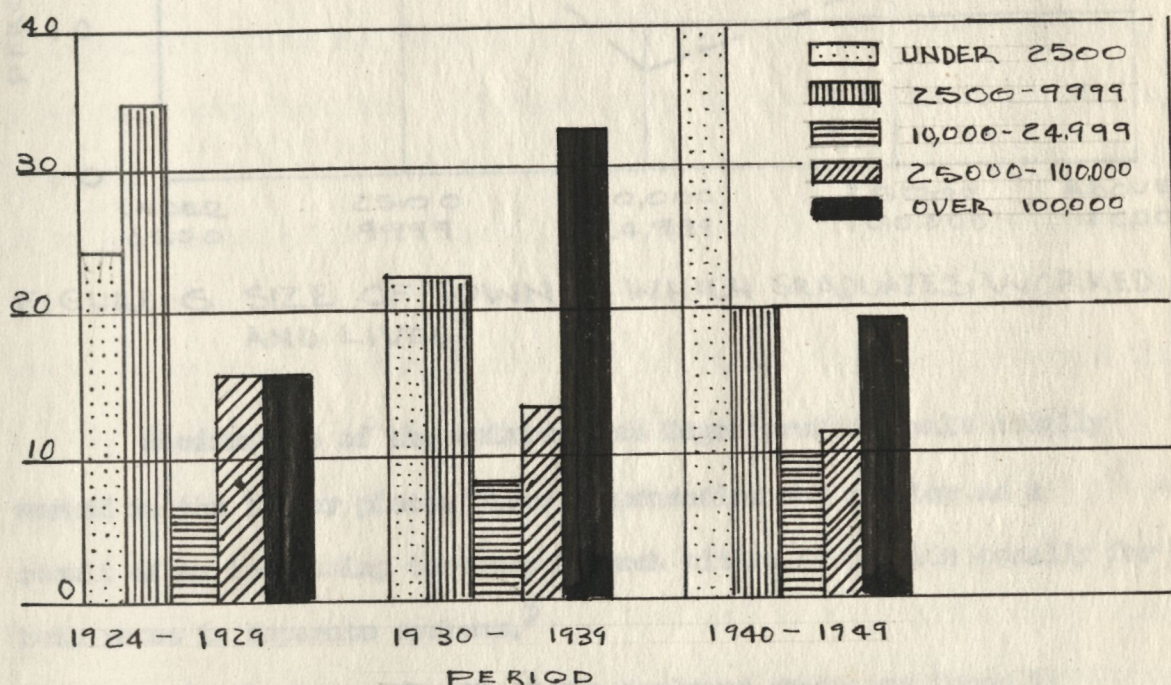


FIGURE 5 SIZE OF TOWN IN WHICH GRADUATES WORKED
ACCORDING TO PERIOD OF GRADUATION

A very interesting relationship was uncovered when a comparison was made between the size of towns in which the graduates worked and the size of towns in which they lived. As indicated in Figure 6, a larger percentage of the graduates worked in towns under 10,000 than lived in towns of that size, whereas more graduates lived than worked in towns of 10,000 and above. Forty-four per cent of the graduates worked in towns above 10,000 as shown in Figure 6.

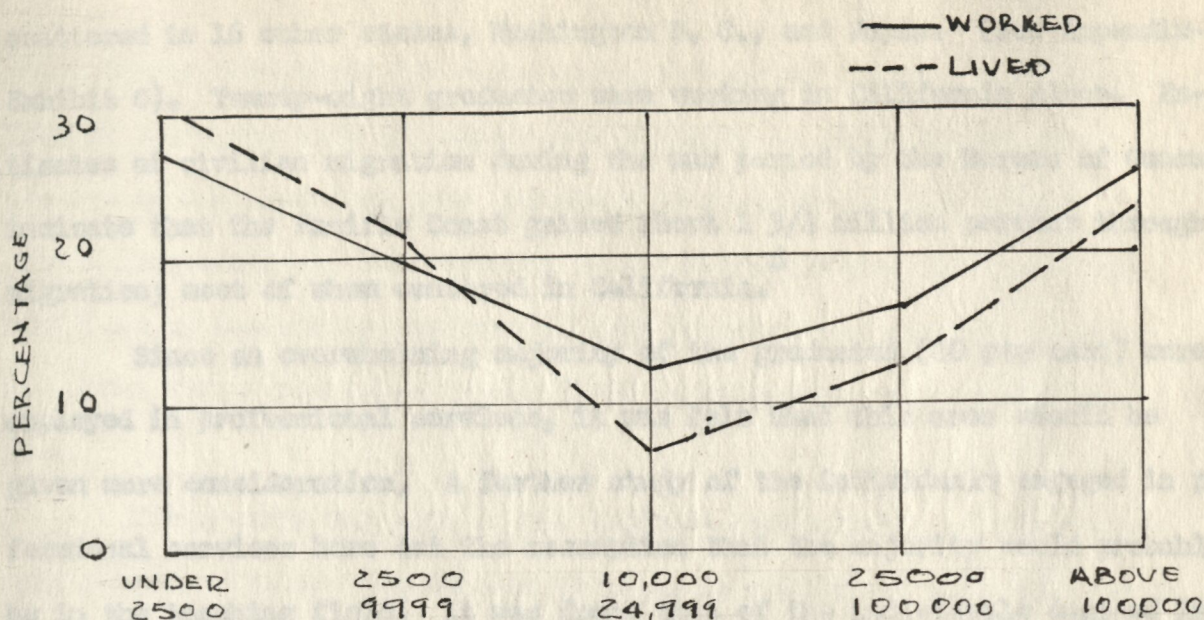


FIGURE 6 SIZE OF TOWN IN WHICH GRADUATES WORKED AND LIVED

Woodson was of the opinion that Negro professionals usually worked in the larger places where compensation was greater as a result of an increasing tendency in such cities to provide equally for both races in separate systems.⁵

Only about one-fourth of the employed graduates found it necessary to work away from the towns in which they had established permanent residence. None of the 1924 and 1926 graduates found it necessary to work away from home. Differences in the proportion of the graduates of the other years who were working at home and away from home seemed too slight to justify an exhaustive analysis.

It was interesting to note that 91 counties in Texas furnished places of employment for 86 per cent of the employed graduates, 11 per cent of whom were working in Harris county alone. The remainder were

⁵ Carter C. Woodson, The Negro Professional Man And His Community, pp. 45-46.

scattered in 16 other states, Washington D. C., and Japan. (See Appendix-Exhibit C). Twenty-eight graduates were working in California alone. Estimates of civilian migration during the war period by the Bureau of Census indicate that the Pacific Coast gained about 1 3/4 million persons through migration; most of whom centered in California.⁶

Since an overwhelming majority of the graduates (80 per cent) were employed in professional services, it was felt that this area should be given more consideration. A further study of the individuals engaged in professional services bore out the assumption that the majority would probably be in the teaching field. It was found that of the individuals engaged in professional services, 67 per cent were in the teaching field alone. This was to be expected, inasmuch as one of the major purposes of Prairie View College is the training of Negro teachers. Then too, the relatively high salaries appeal to the college graduate. In addition, the graduates can meet the state requirements within the four years of the college course and earn the teacher's certificate without any special difficulty. Caliver states, "A large proportion of Negro college students prepare themselves to become teachers because of the great difficulty experienced in entering many of the occupations requiring college training."⁷

When the individuals following teaching as a profession were analyzed, it was found that nearly half (46 per cent) were high school Homemaking teachers. It was assumed that many of the more recent graduates might not be teaching in the field of Homemaking, but this was found to be incorrect. Of the individuals who were graduated from 1930-

6

Emile B. Smullyan, "State Variations In War Migration", Monthly Labor Review, September, 1944, pp. 481-485

7

Ambrose Caliver, General Studies Of Colleges For Negroes, U. S. Office of Education, Misc. No. 6, p. 12

39, a larger percentage was high school Homemaking teachers than was true of those who were graduated from 1924-29. A still larger percentage of the graduates from 1940-48 were found to be high school Homemaking teachers. The majority of the graduates who reported their positions as Homemaking teachers in high schools were married, teaching in a town with a population under 2,500 in which they permanently resided.

Twenty-five per cent of the teachers were working in the elementary school. Ten per cent failed to state on what level they were teaching. The remaining 19 per cent were college, adult, veteran, substitute, secondary school, and pre-school teachers and teachers of the mentally deficient.

Special attention should be called to the graduates who were engaged in professional services other than teaching. The graduates held positions as principals, directors and acting-directors of Home Economics in colleges, social workers, librarians, and home demonstration agents.

There were eleven graduates employed as principals, all of whom were working in Texas. One was graduated in 1926, four from 1930-39 and the remaining six from 1940-48. The majority of these principals were employed in towns other than the ones in which they had established permanent residence. It was interesting to note that all of the principals were married with the exception of the one who graduated in 1931. Towns whose populations ranged from 275 to 15,232 provided employment for these graduates who were principals.

There were four individuals employed as directors or acting directors of Home Economics in colleges. One of them was graduated in 1926 and the other three completed their work from 1930-39.

All of them were married and were found to be serving colleges in Texas and Virginia. Twenty-seven graduates were employed as home demonstration agents, all of whom were working in Texas. All of these individuals graduated since 1929 and most of them were married.

Some of the graduates were engaged in miscellaneous services. Five were employed as social workers, all of whom were graduated from 1930-39 and were found working in towns above 100,000 in Texas, Colorado, and Japan. Two graduates had filled positions as librarians, one in a town under 2,500 and the other in a town above 100,000.

When the services in which the graduates were engaged had been classified as to whether they were or were not related to Home Economics, it was found that 84 per cent (379) were working in the field of Home Economics or in a closely related field.

A small space was provided at the bottom of the post card questionnaire for remarks. More than one-third of the respondents took advantage of the opportunity and made comments that were interesting and varied. Some even wrote letters amplifying their remarks.

A few of the remarks that the graduates made concerning their Home Economics training are quoted:

"My Home Economics training has enabled me to keep a job every year since graduation in the field of Supervision and Homemaking". Homemaking teacher--1934

"I have been employed as Homemaking teacher since I received my degree. Thanks to my training at Prairie View". Homemaking teacher--1931

"My B. S. degree in Home Economics has been a wonderful background in this nutritional program". Salesman for Food Products Company--1938

"Too much theory and not enough practice is offered at Prairie View". Elementary teacher--1947

"More and more I can appreciate my training in Home Economics".

--1934

"Most of the lessons learned in Home Economics have been of benefits which cannot be measured". Home demonstration agent--1935

Additional remarks illustrate how the graduates feel about this investigation:

"I was happy to give this information. Best wishes" Home Demonstration Agent--1936

"I hope that the findings of this study may be revealed". Homemaking teacher--1940

"I would like to know the results of the survey". Adult Teacher --1937

"I think this is a worthy undertaking. I feel that the data collected will be of value to those responsible for strengthening of the homemaking program". State Teacher Helper--1931

Some of the graduates told of both their present and previous positions. Others told of their future plans. Some quotations of this nature were especially revealing:

"Besides my regular work, I am a supervisor of an adult class in Home Economics, Notary Public, Deputy Sheriff, Treasurer of Nutrition Council, Vice President of Artesia Chapter of NAACP, Nurse Aid, Red Cross Instructor, Member of the Director's Board of Carlsbad Recreation Association, and 4-H and Girl Scout Leader". Elementary teacher--1936

"I was chemist in Food Research 1944-48, now attending the University of California in Berkeley". Graduate Student--1941

"I have been in the homemaking field since graduation". Homemaking teacher--1929

"I was in Home Economics work until 1936. I was in the army one year as a club director, with the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1936, and I have been with the Oklahoma State Department of Education since 1939". State Teacher Trainer--1927

"This is the first time that the Negroes here have had a school. It is named after me". Principal of elementary school--1948

Other responses made by the graduates told of their families and a variety of things.

Although 62 per cent of the individuals believed to have re-

ceived questionnaires responded sooner or later, the writer was still deeply concerned about the 38 per cent from whom no responses had been received. Many people are of the opinion that graduates who are not well located occupationally are less likely to reply to inquiries about their status than are graduates who are better situated. As a result, the writer made a study of the graduates who had failed to respond to the first letter with the aim to discover the differences, if any, between them and those who had responded.

Questionnaires accompanied by letters of an informal nature were mailed to 50 graduates selected at random, urging their immediate reply. Replies were received from 36 of these individuals who had graduated from 1929 to 1948.

Thirty-four of these graduates (94 per cent) were gainfully employed in Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas, New York, and California. It was found that sixty per cent of those employed found work in the towns in which they had established permanent residence. The towns in which the 34 graduates were employed ranged in population from 275 to 1,714,841. The two graduates who were unemployed were from the 1948 class.

It is of interest at this point to discuss the types of work in which the last group of graduates were found to be engaged. Seventy-three per cent of those replying were engaged in professional services while the remaining ones were in managerial services, clerical work, or were housewives.

It was thought that perhaps those who did not answer were not well placed and consequently did not wish to respond, but the brief study showed no striking differences in the occupations which these graduates were engaged who answered the first appeal. However it was found that the

majority of those in the last group were engaged in professional services with teaching claiming 92 per cent. There were teachers of homemaking, elementary school teachers and other teachers of adults, and the nursery school.

Inasmuch as the study of the graduates who failed to respond to the first appeal showed no striking differences when compared with those who responded, the writer feels that the graduates who were included in the entire study were representative of all of the individuals who have been graduated from the Division of Home Economics at Prairie View A. & M. College between the dates of May, 1922 and August, 1948.

Graduates who were not included in this study unless they were graduates of the Division of Home Economics at the undergraduate level.

The announcement regarding the study was made by the Director of the Division of Home Economics and the results of the study of the individuals who had been graduated, 18 of whom were known to be deceased. The remaining names were listed in alphabetical order and grouped according to the year of graduation.

A questionnaire was constructed which, when filled out, would supply the needed information. A letter explaining the purpose of the investigation accompanied the questionnaire to the 70 graduates whose addresses were available or could be readily obtained.

Fifty-four letters were returned for want of better addresses and it was felt that the rest of the questionnaires were received. After a period of a month and a half, 48 (48) out of 70 were believed to have received questionnaires and responses. It is the opinion of the

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine what the Home Economics graduates of Prairie View College were doing for a livelihood. This survey covered a 26 year period, beginning in 1922 with the graduation of the first degree class in Home Economics to the end of the academic year 1947-48. During this period, the Division of Home Economics at Prairie View granted 996 degrees, 15 of which were Master's Degrees and the remaining were Bachelor's Degrees. Some individuals received both degrees within this period. The students who earned a Master's Degree with a Minor in Home Economics Education were not included in this study unless they were Prairie View Home Economics graduates on the under-graduate level.

The commencement programs on file in the Offices of the Registrar and of the Director of Home Economics supplied the names of the individuals who had been graduated, 18 of whom were known to be deceased. The remaining names were listed in alphabetical order and grouped according to the year of graduation.

A questionnaire was constructed which, when filled out, would supply the needed information. A letter explaining the purpose of the investigation accompanied the questionnaire to the 700 graduates whose addresses were available or could be readily obtained.

Fifty-four letters were returned for want of better addresses and it was felt that the rest of the questionnaires were received. After a period of a month and a half, 419 (64 per cent of those believed to have received questionnaires) had responded. It is the opinion of Odum

(10) that the research student who gets a twenty per cent return on his first appeal may consider himself fortunate.

However, the writer was interested in getting as many responses as could possibly be obtained. Consequently, another careful search was made which revealed the addresses of 81 graduates to whom the investigator had not written. Letters mailed to these individuals contained personal notes from the Director of Home Economics urging their immediate reply. The Director of Home Economics has served in that capacity since the graduation of the first degree class in 1922 and Elmer (4) feels that one can expect a good response from recipients who have a personal knowledge of the sender. At the completion of the second attempt, 451 responses had been received.

Although the survey was closed with a 62 per cent return, the writer was still deeply concerned about the occupational status of those graduates who did not reply. The master tabulation sheets furnished the names of the individuals from whom no responses had been received. Informal letters, urging their reply, were mailed to fifty of these individuals whose names were selected at random. Seventy-two per cent (36) of these individuals responded. In all, 487 graduates (66 per cent of those believed to have received questionnaires) responded.

Only two per cent of the individuals who responded were found to be unemployed. One half of these were 1948 graduates, but according to Reeves (11), one should not regard the occupational status of recent college graduates as being final inasmuch as some are unemployed while waiting for satisfactory placement.

The employed graduates were engaged in a variety of occupational services which can be grouped under seven basic classifications namely

professional, clerical, managerial, commercial, and domestic services, manufacturing and mechanical industries, proprietorships, and homemaking.

More than three-fourths of the graduates in professional services were teachers and the remainder of those in this type of service held such positions as high school principals, supervisors, social workers, directors of Home Economics in colleges, librarians, and home demonstration agents.

Most of the individuals following teaching as a profession were high school homemaking teachers. Elementary school work claimed more than one-fourth of all teachers. An active guidance program at Prairie View might reduce the number of students who train for one field and then enter another. A study of the employment opportunities available for Negro college graduates trained in Home Economics in Texas might reveal many other areas other than teaching for which the college can train on a larger scale. A program of placement worked out jointly between the prospective employers and the college administrators may prove beneficial to the college, its graduates, and to the prospective employer.

However, the situation is not as critical as it may seem. In the first place, only two per cent of the graduates were found to be unemployed and half of these had not had ample time to get properly placed since they were 1948 graduates. In the second place, 86 per cent of the graduates were working in the field of Home Economics or some very closely related field. When the occupations were grouped into two areas, namely related and unrelated, it was found that there were no significant differences in the percentage of the earlier and the more recent graduates who were working in related fields.

It was interesting to note that 75 per cent of the graduates

responding were married and more were living in towns above 10,000 than any other size. Ninety-six counties of Texas furnished places of employment for 88 per cent of the employed graduates, 12 per cent of whom were working in Harris county alone. The remainder were scattered in 16 other states, Washington D. C., and Japan. Thirty-one were working in California alone.

It is the hope of the writer that this study will be of some benefit to the administration at Prairie View. In the first place, the recent addresses gained by means of the survey may be useful in contacting graduates for various reasons. In the second place, it has revealed what the individuals who have been graduated from the Home Economics Division between the dates of May, 1922 and August, 1948 were doing for livelihood. As previously stated, the places graduates are called to fill indicate, to some extent, the type of preparation students need while in college if they are to adequately perform the social tasks demanded of them.

Perhaps the findings of this study may be used by officials as a basis for offering more effective guidance and use may be made of the facts to point the way toward some necessary curriculum changes. However, if the picture presented in this investigation only causes the administrators to think seriously of what can be done to improve the occupational status of Prairie View graduates, the writer will feel that this study has been beneficial.

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APPENDIX

EXHIBIT A
COPY OF QUESTIONNAIRE

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF PRAIRIE VIEW
HOME ECONOMICS GRADUATES
1922-1948

Mrs. _____
Miss _____
Last name First name Maiden name

Year of graduation _____

Position _____

Location _____

Permanent address _____

Remarks:

THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS



MRS. TOMMYE MAYES MITCHELL
P. O. Box 416
Hempstead, Texas

EXHIBIT B

COPY OF LETTER

Prairie View A. & M. College
Prairie View, Texas
February 21, 1949

Dear

The occupational status of the Home Economics graduates of Prairie View has become a matter of great importance. In connection with my graduate work at Prairie View, I am making a study of the occupational status of the Home Economics students who graduated from May, 1922 to August, 1948.

This study is an essential part of my thesis requirement for a Master's Degree with a major in Home Economics Education. The enclosed form contains questions the answers to which will supply this needed information. If you supply this information promptly, it will greatly assist me in completing my work.

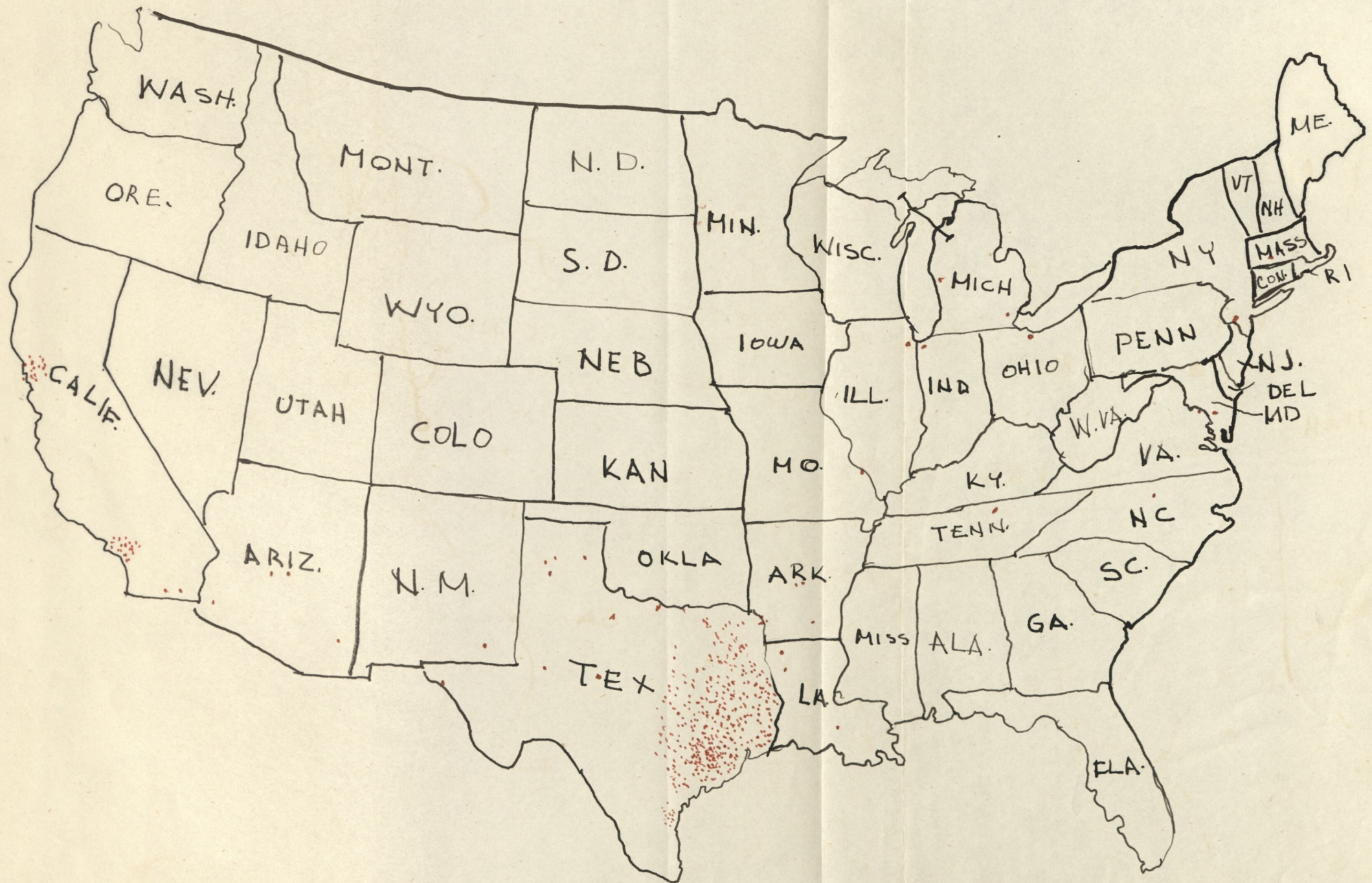
My adviser and the president of the college have expressed the opinion that this information when compiled will be of invaluable aid to the administration at Prairie View in that it should reveal many types of jobs in which Home Economics graduates are now engaged. Such knowledge should help officials to offer more effective guidance and make some necessary curriculum changes. The college would also be able to contact graduates for various reasons if their addresses were known.

Your response to this request will be appreciated by me and my adviser.

Yours truly,

Student: Tommie Mayes Mitchell

Adviser: E. May Galloway



GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF GRADUATES